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ABSTRACT

During the 1993 session, the Nevada State Legislature passed a School Accountability bill (NRS 385.347 revised), which required all school districts in the state to inform the public on the performance of public schools. School accountability is accomplished through a system of reports to the public and the State Board of Education. Each year the Board of Trustees of each school district is required to prepare an accountability report in three parts: individual school accountability reports, a districtwide school accountability report, and a report on the effectiveness of the district's accountability program. The Nevada Review Panel on School District Accountability conducts an independent review of the accountability report and submits recommendations. This document presents a comprehensive review of the panel's findings based on the analysis of all the accountability reports, submitted in spring 1996 from school districts for the 1994-95 school year. The accountability program of each school district is analyzed in five sections: (1) a summary of student-performance and school characteristics; (2) areas of exemplary achievement or improvement; (3) areas in need of improvement at the school site; (4) summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site; and (5) recommendations for improving the analysis and use of accountability findings at the school and district levels. Three tables are included. Appendices contain a copy of Senate Bill No. 511: NRS 385.347 and a letter from the Office of the Attorney General regarding NRS 385.347. (LMI)

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Panel of Scholar's Report on the Nevada School Accountability Program

School Year 1994-95

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Panel of Scholar's Report
on the
Nevada School Accountability Program

School Year 1994-95

Nevada Review Panel on
School District Accountability
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Nevada Department of Education

December 1996

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Department of Education Note

The Progress Report on the Nevada School Accountability Program: Review Analysis, and Recommendations which follows was completed October 3-4, 1996. Subsequent to the Panel's review, two school districts, Humboldt and Mineral County, submitted information on "Part III Report on the Effectiveness of the District's Program of Accountability" which described exemplary achievement and plans for improvement, etc. That information is not included in the Panel's report because it was not available for analysis by the required date.

A Report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Nevada Department of Education

December 1996

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE NEVADA SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM: REVIEW, ANALYSIS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

by The Nevada Review Panel on
School District Accountability

University of Nevada, Reno and Las Vegas

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1996 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE NEVADA SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM: REVIEW, ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Background

During the 1993 session, the Nevada State Legislature passed a School Accountability bill (NRS 385.347 revised, "SB 511") requiring all school districts in Nevada to inform the public on the performance of public schools throughout the state. This bill was a revision and expansion of SB74 enacted by the Nevada legislature in 1989. School accountability is to be accomplished through a system of reports to the public and to the State Board of Education. Each year, the Board of Trustees of each school district in the State is required to prepare an accountability report in three parts:

- Part I. Individual School Accountability Reports are to be presented to the public during March of each year.
- Part II. A District-Wide School Accountability Report is also to be presented to the public during March of each year.
- Part III. A Report on The Effectiveness of the District's Program of Accountability is to be submitted to the State Board of Education, on or before June 15. This report, separate from Parts I and II, is to summarize the effectiveness of the district's program of accountability during the school year and describe the efforts the district has made to correct deficiencies identified in the report.

The accountability reports to the public must contain information concerning

- educational goals and objectives;
- comparisons of student achievement for the current school year with previous school years;
- ratios of students to teachers and other data concerning licensed and unlicensed employees of the school district;
- comparisons of teacher assignments with the qualifications and licensure of teachers;
- expenditures per pupil, set forth individually for each source of funding;
- curriculum employed by the school district, including any special programs for students at an individual school;
- records of attendance and advancement of students and graduation rates in each high school;
- efforts to increase communication with parents of students; and
- other information as directed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

A Handbook for Implementation of NRS 385.347 School Accountability Legislation which provides specific instructions for the accountability reports was prepared by the Nevada Department of Education to provide the direction required by the statute. The most recent update of this handbook was distributed to each school district in Nevada in November, 1995.

The School Accountability Law charges the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with representatives of various educational associations in the State, with prescribing the forms for the reports and ensuring the implementation of a uniform system of reporting that provides comparable information for schools across the state. The State Superintendent is required to analyze the information submitted to the State Board and report to the Legislature, on or before February 1 of each year, concerning the effectiveness of the program of school accountability. This document is designed to help address this requirement for analysis and reporting of information concerning the effectiveness of the accountability program.

The Review Process

The Nevada Department of Education has established an external review process with the collaboration of the Deans of the Colleges of Education at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). The Nevada Review Panel on School District Accountability has been charged with the responsibility of conducting an independent review of the accountability reports and submitting recommendations to the Superintendent of Public Instruction about how these reports may be improved in the future. The panel consists of university faculty members appointed by the Deans of Education from UNR and UNLV. This approach was initiated in 1992 to provide an objective and impartial perspective on the accountability reports submitted by the districts.

Prior to 1996, the director and a consultant in the planning, research, and evaluation department of the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) worked closely with the review panel and provided a statewide database which enabled reviewers to consider information from each school in the context of state and district averages. This database was important to the ability of the panel to compare factors such as enrollment, demographics, staff, programs, attendance, class

sizes, achievement on tests, and per-pupil expenditures. The two professional staff members, who had reviewed the reports from the various districts, met with the panel and shared their insights.

When the panel adjourned at the conclusion of its meetings in October 1995, dates were set for the 1996 review process. In September, 1996, when the panel facilitator contacted the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) to request the school reports and statewide database, she was advised that the person previously responsible for the accountability project had resigned and that reorganization of the NDE had reassigned responsibility for the accountability process to a new unit on finance and accountability. Although no statewide averages or statewide database had been prepared, the panel was asked to proceed with its review process, as scheduled. Panel members reviewed Part I, Part II, and Part III Reports from the various school districts.

The nine professors on the panel each analyzed in depth the student performance data of individual districts and presented their findings to the entire panel. Subgroups of panel members further analyzed each district's Part III Reports on the effectiveness of the accountability program for each of the individual schools in the district.

This document presents a comprehensive review of the panel's findings based on the analysis of all of the accountability reports, submitted in the spring of 1996 from school districts across the state. The reports submitted in the spring of 1996 were for the 1994-95 school year.

Progress Report by the Panel of Scholars

The Panel of Scholars recognized that most districts in Nevada were conscientious in preparing their Part I. School Reports and Part II. District-Wide Reports. Tables 1 and 2 are provided to show the great extent to which districts provided complete reports to be distributed to citizens. These charts show which districts provided each of the components detailed in Handbook for Implementation of NRS 385.347 School Accountability Legislation.

TABLE 1. **REQUIRED ITEMS INCLUDED IN PART I. SCHOOL REPORTS**

	Carson City	Church	Clark	Douglas	Elko	Eureka	Humboldt	Lander	Lincoln	Lyon	Mineral	Nye	Pershing	Storey	Washoe	White Pine
Principal's highlights																
School progress toward goals																
Enrollment																
Change in enrollment																
Transiency rate																
Average daily attendance																
Dropout rates																
Truancy rate			Sec only			HS only									HS only	
Counselor/student ratio																
Suspensions/ expulsions, referrals due to violence, weapons, controlled subst																
% of teachers by degree type																
Years of teaching experience																
% teachers in area of license & endors														7-12 only		
Teacher/student ratios (K-6)																
Average class sizes (7-12)																

NOTE: School districts that presented the required information in their individual school reports are shaded in the blocks above.
Due to small school size, Esmeralda County met the Nevada School Accountability requirement by filing a combined report. Hence it is not in Table 1.

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TABLE 1. **REQUIRED ITEMS INCLUDED IN PART I. SCHOOL REPORTS** (Continued)

	Carson City	Churchill	Clark	Douglas	Elko	Eureka	Humboldt	Lander	Lincoln	Lyon	Mineral	Nye	Pershing	Storey	Washoe	White Pine
% taught by teachers outside license & endorsement (7-12)	grade not subject						#s not %s									
% students tested on CTBS																
Average %ile rank 3-year comparison																
% in top & bottom quartile nationally																
Writing proficiency by trait (8th grade)																
% passing Nevada High School Proficiency Exam																
College entrance exams -- % taking									ACT only					ACT only		
Average ACT & SAT scores									ACT only							
% students in special / highlighted programs																
% Parents at parent-teacher conferences	Elem. only		Elem only	Elem ; 2 MS	Elem & Combined		only one								Elem. only	
Expenditures per student for instruction, administration, building operation, staff support, student support																
Sources of revenues or resources																

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NOTE: School districts that presented the required information in their individual school reports are shaded in the blocks above.
Due to small school size, Esmeralda County met the Nevada School Accountability requirement by filing a combined report. Hence it is not in Table 1.

TABLE 2. **REQUIRED ITEMS INCLUDED IN PART II. DISTRICT REPORTS**

	Carson City	Churchill	Clark	Douglas	Elko	Esmeralda	Eureka	Humboldt	Lander	Lincoln	Lyon	Mineral	Nye	Pershing	Storey	Washoe	White Pine
Superintendent's review																	
District highlights																	
Progress toward goals																	
Secondary curriculum																	
Enrollment															NDT		
Change in enrollment															NDT		
Transiency rate															NDT		
Average daily attendance rate															NDT		
Truancy rates															NDT		
Dropout rates						no HS in district											
Counselor/student ratio															NDT		
Student suspension / expulsion for school violence, weapons, or distribution of controlled substances																	
% teachers by degree															NDT		
Years of teaching experience																	
% teachers in area of license & endorsem															NDT		
Teacher/student ratios by grade (K-6)															NDT		

NOTE: NDT indicates instances when no district totals were presented in the district report.

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TABLE 2. **REQUIRED ITEMS INCLUDED IN PART II. DISTRICT REPORTS** (Continued)

	Carson City	Churchill	Clark	Douglas	Elko	Esmeralda	Eureka	Humboldt	Lander	Lincoln	Lyon	Mineral	Nye	Pershing	Storey	Washoe	White Pine
Average class size for 7-12 English, math, science, social studies	7-8 only					7-8 (no HS in district)											
% taught by teachers outside license & endorsement (7-12)	not by subject					7-8 (no HS in district)	#s not %										
% students included in CTBS/4 testing			NDT													NDT	
Average %ile rank on CTBS/4																	
% in top & bottom quartile nationally																	
Writing proficiency by trait (8th grade)																	
% passing High Sch Proficiency Exam						No seniors											
% of seniors taking ACT and SAT						No seniors				ACT only		#s not %			ACT only		
Average scores on ACT and SAT						No seniors				ACT only							
% students in special / highlighted programs															NDT		
% students whose parent/guardian attended parent-teacher conference		NDT	NDT												NDT	NDT	
Expenditures per student in instruction, administration, building operations, staff support, and student support																	
Sources of revenues or resources																	

NOTE: NDT indicates instances when no district totals were presented in the district report.

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Without statewide averages, it was not possible for the review panel to comment on performance of students across the state, as it has done in the past. For instance, in its 1995 report, the panel noted that the average daily attendance rate of Nevada students in 1993-94 was only 92.3%. School districts were urged to work on improving school attendance. The Panel recognized that the attendance rate could have been even lower than this, since schools vary as to how they record excused and unexcused absences. School effectiveness research consistently links student learning with time-on-task. However, few school sites identified attendance as an area in need of improvement. Without a statewide average attendance for 1994-95, it was not possible to assess whether attendance had improved.

Progress was evident in the way the districts reported student achievement. In 1995, the review panel expressed concern that 10 of the 17 districts had not reported the percentage of their students who were tested. This made it impossible to accurately determine how Nevada students' achievement compared with that of their peers across the nation. In their 1996 reports, 13 districts reported the percentage of their students who were tested. The districts which had still not reported this information were Eureka, Mineral, Pershing, and Storey.

The panel recommends that consistent standards be established as to what students should be included in statewide testing. When the number of students excluded from testing far exceeds the number of students in special education or English as a second language classes, explanation should be provided. In addition, the way of reporting percentage of students tested should account, in some way, for students who are absent on test days.

The panel also recommends that the Nevada Department of Education continue its former practice of providing a statewide data base and involving professional staff in the accountability review process in a timely fashion.

In contrast to the general compliance with Part I and Part II Reports, a far lower degree of compliance with NRS 385.347 was evident with regard to the Part III Report on the Effectiveness of the District's Program of Accountability. Only 10 of the 17 districts in the state submitted complete Part III Reports. This was a far lower degree of compliance than in 1995.

Standards for analyzing the Part III Reports on the Effectiveness of the Accountability Program were provided by the Handbook for Implementation of NRS 385.347 School Accountability Legislation. This handbook specifically outlines what is to be included in Part III

The evaluation of accountability findings should contain, but not be restricted to, the following elements for each school producing an individual school accountability report:

a. identification of areas of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year;

b. a review of the evidence of exemplary achievement and/or performance improvements at the school site;

c. any model programs or activities at the school site that are believed to be responsible for the areas of exemplary performance or the improved performance at that site;

d. an indication of specific areas where needs for improvement in performance at the school site were identified;

e. a review of the evidence for any deficiencies identified at the site;

f. district/school efforts to impact those areas for improvement at the school site.

The evaluation of accountability findings also should contain any district-wide areas for improvement, along with the evidence for those deficiencies, and any efforts in the future to secure the improvement desired.

Table 3 shows which districts submitted each of the prescribed components in its Part III Reports and shows the extent to which districts used accountability data to plan school improvement.

The Part III Reports of some districts show dramatically that schools are using accountability data to identify areas of exemplary or improved performance and areas in need of improvement and to develop plans for improvement which are clearly related to student outcomes. Districts to be commended for particularly outstanding use of accountability data to plan school improvement are Carson City, Douglas, and Nye.

Concerns arising from the review of the Part III Reports of a number of districts, lead to the following recommendations for next year's use of accountability findings:

- Planning for improvement needs to occur at the individual school level as well as the district level.
- School site plans should clearly relate their plans for improvement to accountability data. In those instances when priorities for improvement are not based on accountability data, schools needs to describe how their priorities were set and provide a rationale for them.

TABLE 3. **PART III: EVALUATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY FINDINGS**

The shaded blocks below indicate which districts had provided these elements in their Part III Reports by October 1, 1996. Though the handbook directs that these elements are to be reported <u>for each school</u>, the shaded cells also include districts that reported on these factors on a districtwide basis only. The analyses of each district's reports which follow recommend school-level consideration for those that reported only at a district level. The two districts which have only one block shaded did not submit a Part III Report as such, but mentioned these items in memos submitted to the Nevada Department of Education.

	Carson City	Churchill	Clark	Douglas	Elko	Esmeralda	Eureka	Humboldt	Lander	Lincoln	Lyon	Mineral	Nye	Pershing	Storey	Washoe	White Pine
a. Identification of areas of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in previous year.																	
b. A review of the evidence of exemplary achievement and/or performance improvements at the school site.																	
c. Any model programs or activities at the school site that are believed to be responsible for the areas of exemplary performance or the improved performance at that site.																	
d. Indication of specific areas where the need for improvement in performance at the school site were identified.																	
e. A review of the evidence for any deficiencies identified at the site.																	
f. District/school efforts to impact those areas for improvement at the school site.																	

Analysis of the Reports on the Effectiveness of the Districts' Program of Accountability and Improvement Efforts

The analysis of the accountability program in each school district is presented in five sections:

1. A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by each district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.
2. Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.
3. Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.
4. Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site
5. Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site and by the school district.

Terminology Used in Reporting Measures of Student Performance

Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS): This set of tests assesses student performance in reading, mathematics, and language. It is an example of a Norm Referenced Test (NRT), which indicates that student scores are compared with a national norm reference group.

Average Percentile Rank: The percent of students in the national norming group that scored lower than the average score of students whose performance is being reported. When the average percentile rank for a school is at the **60th percentile**, it indicates that its students scored **higher than 60%** of students in the national norming group. The national average score is at the 50th percentile.

Quartile: Scores of students in the national norming group are also divided into quartiles. One fourth of the students are in the bottom quartile, one fourth in the top quartile, etc. When a group of students performs at a level similar to the national norming group, 25% are in the top quartile and 25% are in the bottom quartile. Higher than average performance is shown when more than 25% are in the top quartile and fewer than 25% in the bottom quartile. Lower than average performance is shown when more than 25% are in the bottom quartile.

Writing Traits: The Statewide Writing Examination, required of all eighth graders in Nevada, is scored on four traits: ideas, organization, voice, and conventions. Results are reported in terms of the percent of eighth graders demonstrating competency in each trait.

Carson City School District

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.*

Enrollment in the Carson City School District increased 3.9%, to 7,371 students in 1994-95. The district included one high school, two middle schools, and six elementary schools.

Fourth grade achievement data from the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) indicated that performance in 1994-95 had increased substantially from 1993-94. Reading and language scores reached the national average (50th percentile), and math, at the 48th percentile was near the average. Fourth graders at Fremont Elementary demonstrated the strongest performance in the district, with average percentile ranks of 64 in reading and math and 61 in language. Fritsch fourth graders also performed well, with average percentile ranks of 55 in reading, 56 in language, and 59 in math. This was especially noteworthy in view of the fact that 43% of Fritch students were eligible for free or reduced price lunches and Fritch tested nearly all (99%) of its fourth graders. Mark Twain Elementary School reported achievement results well below the national average in reading, language, and math. Seeliger Elementary School demonstrated dramatic improvement in all areas but tested only 84% of its fourth graders as compared to testing all fourth graders the previous year. No explanation was offered for the 16% of students not tested.

Achievement results in 1994-95 for eighth grade were also significantly higher than in 1993-94. Average percentile ranks were 60 in reading, 57 in language arts, and 56 in mathematics. These averages are well above the national norm of 50 and show an improvement of more than ten percentile ranks from 1993-94. Both middle schools showed strong improvement in all areas, but the improvements at Carson Middle School were exceptional, with increases in average percentile ranks of 13 points in reading, 14 points in language arts, and 16 points in mathematics. However, these improvements were accompanied by a decrease in the percentage of students tested, from 97% in 1993-94 to 90% in 1994-95. No explanation was given for the decline in the percentage of students tested.

The percentage of seniors passing the Nevada High School Proficiency Examination was down slightly from 1993-94, and performance on college entrance exams was slightly higher.

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

Carson City School District

Though still below the district average, great improvements in achievement were noted by Empire Elementary School. Language arts scores improved by 20 percentile points, reading by 19 points, and math by 16 points. Improvement in reading and language arts was attributed to the adoption of the Daily Oral Language (DOL) program about half way through the year. Fremont Elementary had also adopted the DOL program and reported modest gains in total language scores.

Continued high levels of academic achievement, increased parent involvement, and improvement in student behavior were identified as areas of exemplary performance at Fritsch Elementary School. High achievement results are attributed to cooperative work among teachers toward increasing whole class instruction time in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Increased parental involvement resulted from greater emphasis on making parents welcome at the school and keeping parents informed by a weekly newsletter. The PTA was also quite active. Conflict management training was seen as helpful in the improvement of student behavior.

Seeliger Elementary School noted improved readiness for first graders due to kindergarten student screening and identification of fifteen students for inclusion in an experiential kindergarten. Additionally, improved behavior was attributed to a "Positive Pirate" recognition program for students who demonstrated kindness, respect, good sportsmanship, and concern for the safety of others. Other areas of notable performance include better ties with the business community, higher student self-esteem, and emergency readiness.

Carson Middle School reported high CTBS scores and an increase in the percentage of student passing all four traits scored on the Statewide Writing Examination. Improved CTBS scores were noted for Eagle Valley Middle School.

Carson High School established several goals toward improving achievement, student behavior, and instructional time-on-task. These emphases were credited with excellent proficiency test results, increases in SAT and ACT scores, reduced class interruptions, fewer referrals, and increased time-on-task.

3. Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.

Every elementary school except Empire identified areas in need of improvement. Bordewich identified reading as needing improvement. Mark Twain recognized deficiencies in

reading and math achievement. Fremont would like to improve achievement in reading, mathematics, and language. Fritsch's faculty recognized the need to promote greater awareness of cultural diversity in the student population. Seeliger saw a need to better articulate curriculum and assessment across grades.

Both Carson Middle School and Eagle Middle School would like to continue to improve CTBS and Analytic Writing Test Scores. Carson High School identified no specific areas in need of improvement. Districtwide needs identified included improvement in CTBS and Analytic Writing Test scores.

4. *Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site.*

Individual schools have identified appropriate strategies to effect improvement in areas of recognized deficiency. Methods include goal setting, school action committees, staff development and inservice sessions, and improved curriculum articulation and alignment.

5. *Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.*

The Carson City School District was clearly using the accountability process to improve instruction and student learning. The district's recognition of areas in need of improvement was evident at both school site and district levels. Goal setting and action plans have focused attention on staff development and student learning. Carson City is commended for its high level of implementation of the Nevada School Accountability process. The recommendations which follow are intended to help refine the district's already noteworthy approach to accountability.

Two questions arose in examining the reported percentages of students taking the CTBS. First, it was noted that Seeliger Elementary School and Carson Middle School had surprisingly low percentages of students taking the CTBS assessment in 1994-95 in comparison with the prior year. Secondly, there was an apparent discrepancy between the reported 98% of students taking the CTBS in grade four for the district and an aggregate of the individual school data which showed 94.5% taking the test in 1994-95. Consistency or clarification was needed.

Carson City School District

While Empire Elementary School could feel justifiably proud of its strong achievement gains in all areas, the need to aim for further improvement was indicated by its average math achievement at the 39th percentile.

Churchill County School District

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.*

Enrollment in 1994-95 was 4,349 in four elementary schools, one junior high school, and one senior high school. All teachers in Churchill County Schools were licensed in the areas in which they were teaching. Teachers with ten or more years of teaching experience composed almost 43% of the teaching staff. Average daily attendance was reported at 93.9%.

Churchill County Schools administer the CTBS in grades two through nine. Results of this testing showed relatively consistent increases in average percentiles in language, mathematics, and reading as students progressed through the grades. The performance range in language went from the 42nd percentile in grade two to the 60th percentile in grade nine. In mathematics, the range was from the 38th percentile in grade two to the 66th percentile in grade nine. For reading, the range was from the 42nd percentile to the 64th percentile over these grades.

Eighth grade writing proficiency was attained by 71% of students in content, 69% in organization, 70% in voice, and 73% in conventions. High school proficiency exam performance was also high with 97.6% demonstrating proficiency in reading, 99.5% in mathematics, and 99.5% in writing.

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

Lahontan Elementary School reported an increase in parent participation from 42% to 76% in 1994-95. Northside Elementary School had 100% PTO membership, an increase of 22%. Churchill County High School graduating seniors had a 99.13% success rate on the high school proficiency exam. Additionally, high school students had an 83% success rate on advanced placement (AP) exams, in comparison with a 66% national average. Churchill County Schools attribute this record to employing, training, and continuing to train an outstanding staff of AP teachers. The truancy rate at the junior high school has dropped dramatically due to a concerted effort to notify parents immediately when students were absent from school.

Churchill County School District

3. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.*

Churchill County Junior High School reported a decline in the percentage of students scoring above the 75th percentile on the CTBS mathematics test from 39% in 1993-94 to 22% in 1994-95. A high school dropout rate of 11% was judged by the school staff to be too high. All elementary schools reported concern about their reported drop in standardized achievement test scores.

4. *Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site.*

The dropout concern was being addressed through an Opportunity Program for students in danger of failure and at risk of dropping out. Additionally, information was being gathered on on the reasons students were dropping out. This information will be used in efforts to identify needs of students at-risk and attempt to meet those needs so students will remain in school.

Elementary schools expressed their intent to focus on improving student achievement. They planned to provide staff development for teachers and contact parents, asking them to provide support and help students develop needed skills.

Other improvement plans included goal setting for the district in March of 1995 and the intention to form a Master Plan Task Force. The district also intended to create a position for a Curriculum/Professional Development Facilitator who would address curriculum evaluation and alignment.

5. *Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.*

The Churchill County School District is using the accountability data to aid in recognition of problem areas and is acting to seek solutions through goal setting and master planning.

Consideration should be given to increasing the percentage of students taking the CTBS. In eighth grade, only 87% took the tests.

Clark County School District

1. A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.

The Clark County School District (CCSD) is one of the ten largest districts in the nation, with 156,348 students enrolled in 1994-95 and an annual growth rate of approximately 10,000 students per year. While growth rates average 8% district-wide, growth at the intermediate level was particularly acute with 23 of 31 schools exceeding the district's average -- some with growth rates as high as 40% and 42%. Reports were provided for 123 elementary schools, 31 intermediate schools and 22 high schools in the CCSD.

At the elementary level, school attendance averaged 92% but varied from 88% to 96%. Attendance at 15 elementary schools was 95% or higher. These were Adams, Antonello, Bartlett, D. Cox, Dooley, Gibson, Heard, Kim, Martha King, Lummis, McDoniel, Mitchell, Newton, Smith and Treen. Secondary schools where attendance rates exceeded 95% were Hyde Park, Cannon, Greenspan, Advanced Technology Academy, Las Vegas Academy, and Moapa High School. Chaparral High School's attendance rate was an outstanding 97%.

There is significant variability among schools in transiency rates. For example, among high schools, transiency rates vary from 9% and 11%, in some magnet schools, to 45% and 52%, in some comprehensive schools.

The academic achievement of Clark County fourth graders was above national averages in math and language, and just below average (at the 49th percentile) in reading. Schools reporting particularly high percentages of students scoring in the top quartile and particularly low percentages scoring in the bottom quartile on the CTBS in the fourth grade included Bartlett, Eisenberg, Gray, Christensen, and Harris. The proportion of students from these schools scoring in the top quartile was 36% or higher, while the proportion scoring in the bottom quartile was less than 10%. Every elementary student in the CCSD participated in music, art, physical education, and computer education programs.

At the secondary levels, student achievement, as measured by the CTBS, indicated significant variability among intermediate and high schools in reading, language arts, and mathematics. Exceptional schools can be consistently identified.

At the elementary level, expenditures were fairly consistent across the district with the exception of rural schools. At the intermediate level, per-pupil expenditures were greater in

schools where students' achievement levels were consistently below the district average. At the high school level, however (with the exception of rural schools), per-pupil expenditures were below the district average in some schools where lower achievement levels and other risk factors were noted.

Course offerings were rich and varied among all high schools in the district with a myriad of special programs. As would be expected, magnet schools provided greater depth in specialized areas and fewer options were available in rural schools.

The teaching force was remarkably stable within a district experiencing tremendous growth. Also, worthy of note was the large number of teachers teaching only within areas in which they are licensed. The few exceptions occurred in the district's rural schools.

2. *Areas of the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

Most often elementary schools reported standardized test achievement as an area of exemplary performance. School attendance was also frequently cited when it was above the district mean or higher than that of the previous year. Twenty-one of 28 intermediate schools cited academic achievement in identified areas as exemplary, and 19 of 22 high schools cited academic achievement in identified areas as exemplary. Other areas frequently cited to illustrate excellence or improvement at all levels were business/community relationships, parental involvement, school improvement plans, and improved student discipline.

3. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.*

The most common area cited as needing improvement was achievement, as measured by standardized, norm-referenced tests (NRT), such as the CTBS. Most frequently cited areas beyond NRT-related topics were 27 indications of need for additional counselor/guidance services and 20 indications of need for improvement or upgrades in the computer technology area. High transiency rates and the need to improve attendance were reported as areas in need of improvement by several elementary schools. At the secondary levels, the most frequently cited area in need of improvement related to enhancing student achievement, particularly as related to test scores. Nine of the high schools and six intermediate schools cited attendance as an area in

need of improvement. Other areas of need identified were class size, home-school communication, career guidance and counseling support. The needs were varied by school and ranged from "formalizing faculty governance" to "creating a positive instructional environment" to "textbooks for every child."

4. Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site

Twenty-five schools indicated that additional counselor resources were part of their improvement plan. Nine cited enhanced computer or technology resources as part of their plan, and 15 indicated that the school had a written improvement plan, while most indicated plans to improve specific academic areas, usually tied to norm-referenced testing.

Districtwide goals and progress toward goal attainment was reported in the district accountability report. The first district goal was to enhance student achievement, particularly in the basics skills areas. Each school developed specific goals which supported the overall mission of the district in the area of student achievement. Additional goals were also listed.

5. Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.

Improvement plans from individual schools need to be more clearly related to the accountability data. When plans do not reflect needs demonstrated by accountability data, the rationale for the plans should be provided. Reporting **results** of activities will be more meaningful than simply listing activities.

Site reports should be checked for accuracy. Several elementary schools did not report standardized test scores; an explanation should have been provided. Reviewing reports of individual schools raises questions about the percentage of students taking (and not taking) the CTBS examinations. Data related to school safety at the elementary level would provide valuable additional information.

It is recommended that attention be given to attendance and parent involvement when schools are reviewing accountability data. While 22 elementary schools were below the district average for attendance and only 15 were above the 95% level, only 9 elementary schools mentioned attendance as an area of concern. A few elementary schools reported very low parental involvement. For instance, Madison, which reported 45 and 50% participation at open houses and conferences, did not mention this as an area for improvement.

Clark County School District

At the high school level, it is recommended that the district examine per-pupil expenditures at schools characterized as at-risk.

Douglas County School District

1. A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.

The Douglas County School District enrolled 7,031 students in five elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools in 1994-1995. During the reporting period, Douglas had a transiency rate of 25% and an overall enrollment growth of 5%. A new middle school (Pau-Wa-Lu Middle School) was opened. A consistent districtwide average daily attendance rate of 93% was reported. Douglas County reported a low dropouts rate of only 3% for high school grades (9-12).

Per-pupil costs were fairly uniform across the schools in Douglas County, with 63% spent on instruction. Class sizes for the elementary level ranged from 14 to 30, with lower teacher-pupil ratios of 14 to 18 in the first and second grades. Class sizes for the middle and secondary levels ranged from 15 to 28. Over 82% of students in all elementary schools participated in art and physical education, while 100% participated in music and computer courses.

Enrollment in special education classes was fairly consistent from school to school, with elementary schools ranging from 5% to 12% and secondary schools from 4% to 8%. Forty-one percent of Douglas County teachers have more than 10 years of experience and 33% of teachers have advanced degrees. Most of Douglas County teachers taught within their areas of licensure.

Districtwide performance of fourth graders in Douglas County on standardized achievement tests was above the average national percentile, with 56 in reading, 62 in language, and 62 in math. Consistent with national norms, 25% of fourth graders scored in the top quartile in reading, while 35% scored in the top quartile in language, and 36% scored in that range in mathematics. Eighty-eight percent of fourth graders took the CTBS.

With 94% of the eighth graders taking the CTBS, their achievement levels were also well above the national average in all three areas. Districtwide average percentile ranks were 62 in reading, 57 in language, and 55 in math. The only middle school which scored below average on any part of the CTBS was Pau-Wa-Lu where the average percentile rank in math was 49. Thirty percent of eighth graders scored in the top quartile in reading, 24% in language, and 27% in mathematics.

Douglas County employed comprehensive assessments in the areas of reading and language arts. Each child's language arts portfolio included yearly writing samples and examples of best work, the Nevada Analytic Writing Exam results, CTBS scores for reading and language,

and the language arts benchmarks. Overall student progress was evaluated using information from all these sources.

New Criterion Referenced Tests (CRTs) in mathematics were piloted for the first time in 1994-1995. The district reported that percentages of students passing these tests were reasonable in grades one through six, varying from 60% to 98%. However, the percentage of seventh and eighth graders passing was considerably lower, leading to increased attention to math skill development at these levels. About 75% of Douglas County eighth graders demonstrated adequate writing competency in each of the four areas tested. On the Nevada High School Proficiency Tests, 99% to 100% demonstrated proficiency in reading, math, and writing. Forty-two percent of Douglas County high school students took the ACT, achieving a district average score of 22.4. Twenty-five percent of students took the SAT, with district averages of 495 in math and 452 in verbal skills. District averages for both ACT and SAT scores were well above national averages.

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

Each school site reported areas of exemplary accomplishment and areas where improvement had been realized. Meneley Elementary School reported high student achievement, a decision-making council, and a student volunteer program that brings off-track students back to school. (Off-track students are those enrolled in a year-round school not in session at the time.) Gardnerville Elementary School reported that math and language CTBS percentiles were up, with higher percentages scoring in the top quartile and fewer in the bottom quartile. In addition, it reported a trend toward more students completing exams at or above their grade level. Scarselli Elementary School reported that teachers were able to adapt instruction to meet the individual skill needs of each student based on the results of individual student profiles emerging from the new math CRTs piloted in grades one through six.

Jacks Valley Elementary reported improvement in all three areas tested by the CTBS and in the percentage of students passing reading/language arts benchmarks from the 93-94 to the 94-95 school year. Zephyr Cove Elementary attributed the success of the students to effective teacher training in math. The staff reported having a successful Family Math Madness Night.

Douglas County School District

Carson Valley Middle School continued to have a strong academic focus, resulting in a large honor roll membership. It acknowledged the importance of involvement by the "school family" -- parents, students, teachers, district office, and the community at large. Kingsbury Middle School reported high achievement in the writing assessment, a two-day outdoor education program organized by fifth grade staff and parents, and participation of seventh and eighth graders in the National Junior Honor Society. Over 30% of students in Pau-Wa-Lu Middle School achieved a 3.25 GPA or better, and over 200 students were inducted into the National Junior Honor Society.

Douglas High School reported high ACT scores, high passing rates on proficiency exams, low dropout rates, and high daily attendance. The school initiated "The Company," a career information program, and reported improved student attendance through the format of a truancy review board.

George Whittell High School reported the effectiveness of their counseling and Career Center interaction with students, noting that they had five Nevada Scholars and that 49 of 50 graduates went on to post-secondary education. Participation in community projects was also highlighted.

3. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.*

Individual schools in the Douglas Country School District identified areas of improvement. Meneley identified the areas of math problem solving and spelling as needing further improvement. Scarselli Elementary identified the significant drop in the area of language as troubling. Math application and computation were also areas of concern.

Jacks Valley indicated a need for improvement in math CRT scores in third, fourth, and sixth grades. Zephyr Cove Elementary identified the fourth grade CTBS scores in language as an area for further improvement, although they had already achieved the 68th national percentile. They laid out the specific plans to achieve this goal.

Two areas indicated for improvement in Carson Valley Middle School were curriculum continuity and technology inservice for staff. Kingsbury Middle School indicated the need to fully implement the District's new integrated math curriculum. Improving math instruction and aligning the curriculum were identified as goals for the year in Pau-Wa-Lu Middle School.

Douglas County School District

A school-wide need to increase emphasis on relevancy and independent learning was indicated by the Douglas High School's development committee. George Whittell High School identified the need to improve communication between school and parents and the community.

4. Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site.

Douglas County school sites reported their goals for improvement. To improve math scores in the area of problem solving, Meneley Elementary formed a school-wide task force, purchased $2,000 in materials, and developed an action research plan. In addition, a task force was formed to study spelling and phonic instruction. It planned to review research from Educational Research Services.

Gardnerville Elementary School planned to use the math CRT pilot test results diagnostically as a means to improve students' future math CRT test scores at grades four, five, and six. Scarselli teachers planned to have on-site math training specifically in the area of problem solving and math menus, and will attend math learning clubs. Scarselli planned to initiate the Test-Mate Program to score language benchmark examinations so that teachers could group students for instructional purposes and mini-lessons.

Jacks Valley Elementary set a goal to increase students' scores on math CRTs in grades three, four, and six, aiming for 75% of students to pass at at least a 75% level of mastery.

Carson Valley Middle School began to lay the ground work for a three-year plan which would include a review of software acquisition, installation of a school-wide network, and staff training.

New mathematics textbooks were purchased and the staff received training in the use of the new integrated math curriculum. Several math teachers meetings were held in Pau-Wa-Lu Middle School to review results and brainstorm methodologies to improve student performance in math. These strategies were to be implemented during the 1995-96 school year.

Practical courses such as emergency medical technician (EMT), certified nurse assistant (CNA), firefighter, child care, and fashion design were added to the regular program in the Douglas High School. Personal goal setting was increased through activities at each grade level, and competency-based programs were offered in "The Company," auto, welding, and agriculture. George Whittell High planned to finalize and put into place a site accountability committee including faculty, parents, students, and administrators, and members selected from the community.

5. Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.

The Douglas County School District showed exemplary progress in improving its accountability process. The Part III Report provided clear evidence that not only was the district engaging in data-based decision making, but also school sites were analyzing accountability data, identifying exemplary and improved programs as well as areas of need, and were making plans for improvement based on the accountability data. The approach Douglas County has taken to the accountabillity process fulfills both the spirit and the letter of Nevada accountability legislation.

Elko County School District

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.*

The 9,496 students in the Elko County School District attended one of eight elementary schools, three secondary schools, four schools serving both elementary and secondary students, and a number of small rural schools. The districtwide attendance rate was 93.8%; the transiency rate was 27%; and the truancy rate was 2.5%. Eighty-five percent of the district's teachers had bachelor's degrees, and 15% held master's degrees. Only 7% of teachers were new, while 42% had been teaching ten years or more. Throughout the district 99% of the teachers were teaching within their area of license/endorsement; however, at Elko High School, 15% of the social studies classes were taught by teachers outside their area of licensure.

Districtwide average achievement of fourth grade students on standardized tests was at the 51st percentile in reading, the 56th percentile in language, and the 52nd percentile in math. Reading achievement of fourth graders attending different schools varied from the 25th to the 66th percentile; math achievement from the 22nd to the 73rd percentile; and language achievement from the 32nd to the 69th percentile. Across the district, 28.1% of Elko fourth graders scored in the top quartile on national norms in reading; 28.2% in the top quartile in language; and 30.7 in the top quartile in math. The districtwide percentage of Elko students scoring in the bottom quarter was 18.8% in reading; 15% in language, and 21.5% in math. Achievement in most grades at Sage Elementary School exceeded the district average. Achievement scores at Southside Elementary School were well below the district average in grades four and five, while achievement at Carlin Combined Schools was below the district average in all elementary grades.

The districtwide average eighth grade student performance on standardized tests was at the 54th percentile in reading and at the 43rd percentile in math. Average reading achievement for the various schools varied from the 31st to the 73rd percentile, and average math achievement varied from the 24th to the 72nd percentile. The percentage of eighth grade students scoring in the top quartile in was 27% in reading and 21% in math, while the percentage of students scoring in the bottom quartile was 17.3% in reading and 26.9% in math. The CTBS scores at Elko Junior High School were above the district average.

Elko County School District

Approximately two-thirds of eighth graders in the Elko County School District demonstrated writing proficiency in all four areas tested. Specifically, 65.3% of the students showed proficiency in ideas/content, 66.3% in organization, 66.6% in voice, and 74% in conventions. The percent of students demonstrating writing proficiency in individual schools was near the district average with the exception of Jackpot, where the levels of proficiency in the various traits ranged from 21.7% to 34.8%. Finally, 42.5% of students in the district took the ACT test with an average score of 21.4, and 16.2% of graduating students took the SAT test with an average math score of 515 and an average verbal score of 481.

Ten percent of Elko County students participated in special education, 8% participated in English as a second language programs, 2% in gifted and talented programs, and 21% received free or reduced price meals. The overall dropout rate was 6.1%. Most individual school dropout rates approximated the district average with the exception of Jackpot, which reports a much higher dropout rate of 15.7%.

Spring Creek Elementary School reported an exceptionally high rate of parent participation and support. Special attention was given to encouraging Hispanic parent participation at West Wendover Elementary School.

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

The Part III Accountability Report from the Elko County School District demonstrated compliance with NRS 385.347 in reporting, for the district and for each school site, areas of exemplary achievement and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year. This detailed section of the Part III Report cited specific details, evidence, and model programs. Examples include improved attendance rates, increasing standardized test scores, reduced dropout rates, increasing numbers of high school students taking the SAT and ACT with higher average scores, increased parent involvement, library automation upgrades, and programs such as StarLab, Guardian Angel, and Parents on Campus.

Elko County School District

3. Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.

Though this report focused on the 1994-95 school year, the district reported that a process for the "careful review of test scores, student demographics, and actual classroom performance to determine any causal relationships began in the fall of 1995 at each school site identified as needing improvement." The focus for these efforts was three schools: Owyhee Combined, Jackpot Combined, and West Wendover Elementary. Concerns included overall low test scores as well as the fluctuating and inconsistent test performance of students.

4. Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site.

The school district described plans for improvement in achievement score outcomes in three schools: Owyhee Combined, Jackpot Combined, and West Wendover Elementary. In addition to the review noted above, a collaborative effort involved additional data collection and interpretation of data gathered from students, staff, parents and community members. Using this process, Jackpot and West Wendover planned to implement plans for improvement effective Fall, 1996. The Owyhee Combined School "will use the 1996-97 school year as a planning year to develop a plan for improvement utilizing the data gathered. Additional technical support will be provided to Owyhee Combined during this developmental stage."

Though no other plans for improvement at individual schools were reported, all schools are expected to be impacted by the District's plans to (1) continue its process of upgrading teacher skills, (2) redevelop the kindergarten curriculum, (3) train teachers in third through sixth grades in direct writing process and analytic trait assessment, (4) begin development of a system for first grade assessment that no longer uses standardized norm-referenced testing, and (5) enter into a multiyear agreement for training staff in the use of math manipulatives.

5. Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.

The individual school reports and the district report for Elko County were all in compliance with the specific requirements for Nevada School Accountability. Data for each school and for the district as a whole were reported for each required area and in a clear, easy-to-read format.

Elko County School District

Increased involvement of individual school sites in planning for improvement is recommended. While it is reasonable to concentrate district resources in schools evidencing the greatest needs for improvement, all school sites can benefit from identifying and reporting specific areas needing improvement in performance, providing evidence for such deficiencies, and describing planned interventions designed to reduce or eliminate deficiencies.

Esmeralda County School District

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.*

The Esmeralda County School District is composed of three elementary schools (Goldfield, Silver Peak, Dyer) serving kindergarten through eighth grade. The total enrollment of all three schools was 117 during the 1994-1995 school year, reflecting an enrollment decline of 10% from the previous year. The district had a transiency rate of 42%. The district-wide attendance rate was 92.5%, and the truancy rate reported in all three schools was zero. Special Education classes served 16.2% of the students and 6% of students participated in Migrant Education. One hundred percent of students received instruction in computer, art, music, and physical education. Finally, 63.2% of the district's students were receiving free/reduced meals.

Twelve teachers were teaching in the district. Seventy-nine percent of these teachers held bachelor's degrees, and 21% held master's degrees. Forty-four percent of the district's teachers have over 10 years' teaching experience and 86% were teaching within their area of licensure or endorsement.

Comparisons of achievement test results from year to year must be done with caution due to the high transiency rate and the small class sizes. Average fourth grade CTBS scores were lower than in the previous year in all three areas tested, and eighth grade CTBS scores were considerably lower than in the previous year. However, students in grades five, six, and seven scored at or above the national average in all areas except sixth grade reading. More than 70% of eighth graders demonstrated writing proficiency in the areas of ideas and conventions.

There was 95% participation in parent-teacher conferences. Students at all sites had the services of a guidance counselor. Seventy-six percent of students who graduated from eighth grade in Esmeralda County schools had either graduated from high school or were still in high school in spite of a district-wide transiency rate of 42%

Because of the small size of all three of the Esmeralda County schools, the Nevada Accountability Program did not require separate individual school reports.

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported the previous year.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, no examples of exemplary achievement or areas of improvement were included in Esmeralda County's Part III report.

Esmeralda County School District

3. Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement.

In violation of NRS 385.347, no areas needing improvement were reported.

4. Summary of the school district's plans for improvement.

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Esmeralda County School District did not submit any plans for improvement.

5. Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings.

Even small schools can benefit from data-based decision making. If accountability data are analyzed and used to plan for improvement, Esmeralda County students are likely to benefit from more focused and improved educational programs.

The plans currently being implemented for more data gathering at the state level could be particularly helpful for small districts such as Esmeralda, which has only one district-level administrator who also serves as a principal in the district.

Eureka County School District

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.*

Eureka County School District enrolled 274 students in two elementary schools and Eureka High School which served grades seven through twelve in 1994-1995, reflecting a 14% reduction in enrollment. Eureka reported a transiency rate of 27%. The attendance rate for the elementary level was 93% and, for the high school, 97%. A zero percent dropout rate was reported in all grade levels.

The districtwide per-pupil expenditure for the 1994-1995 school year was $15,347, the highest in the state; of this amount $8,818 or 57% was spent on instruction. Class sizes for the elementary grades ranged from 11 to 27 except for one kindergarten with an enrollment of only 4. The one class with 27 students was served by two teachers. Class sizes for seventh through twelfth grades ranged from 12 to 28.

One hundred percent of students in both elementary schools participated in art, music, physical education, and computer courses. Enrollment in special education was 18% in the elementary level and 20% in the high school. No students received English as a second language, migrant education, or after school care service.

Forty percent of Eureka County teachers had more than 10 years of experience and 16% of teachers had advanced degrees. The only instance where a class was taught by a teacher out of his or her area of licensure was one English class.

District-wide performance of fourth graders in Eureka County on the CTBS varied from grade to grade, with grades two and four scoring below the national average in reading and math, and grade eight scoring well above the national average in reading, language, and math. School-by-school analysis indicated that, compared to the previous year, performance gains were noted in all three areas in grade two of Beowawe Elementary, while sharp declines were found in fourth and sixth grades. In Eureka Elementary School, achievement declined in all three subject areas assessed by the CTBS among second, fourth, and sixth graders. While some variation from grade to grade is to be expected in small schools, the consistency of the downward trend in performance of elementary students between 1993-94 and 1994-95 appears to be cause for concern.

Over 80% of eighth graders demonstrated writing proficiency, and a 100% passing rate was reported on the Nevada High School Proficiency Exam. Average scores on college entrance exams were 20.8 on the ACT, 446 in SAT math and 401 in SAT verbal skills. Although these

Eureka County School District

SAT scores were still below the national average, there was improvement from the 1993-1994 school year.

In summary, while achievement gains were evident at the middle school and high school levels, declining test scores in the elementary level were of concern.

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the district did not provide these data in its Part III Report.

3. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the district did not provide these data in its Part III Report.

4. *Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Eureka County School District did not submit any plans for improvement in its Part III Report.

5. *Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.*

Some areas needing improvement are readily recognizable. If the accountability data are analyzed and used for planning for improvement, students in Eureka Country schools are likely to benefit from the focused and improved education. A similar recommendation was made in regard to the report submitted in the previous academic year.

NRS 385.347 and the Accountability Handbook provided by the Nevada Department of Education clearly set out expectations that districts will use accountability data to plan school improvement. Though the need to analyze and use accountability data to plan school improvement was identified in the October 1995 Progress Report on the Nevada School Accountability Program, the 1996 Part III report from Eureka County School District showed an "N/A" beside each of the Part III information requests.

Humboldt County School District

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.*

Humboldt County School District enrolled 3,702 students in 1994-95. The schools included three elementary schools, six remote rural schools serving kindergarten through eighth grade, McDermitt Combined School serving kindergarten through grade twelve, Winnemucca Junior High School, and Lowry High School.

The districtwide average daily attendance rate was 93.4%, with Lowery High School reporting the lowest ADA rate of 91.3%. Lowery High School also reported a truancy rate of 7.5%. Its dropout rate of 6% is commendable.

Districtwide CTBS scores were not reported in a multiple year format, so longitudinal trend data were not available. However, in average percentile rank scores, the second through sixth grade levels showed that performance in reading tests was consistently weaker than in language and math tests.

Winnemucca Grammar School reported scores below the district average in second and fifth grades and above the district average in third and fourth grades. Grass Valley Elementary School scored below the district average in grades two through five, while Sonoma Heights scored above the district average in grades two through five. Student-teacher ratios at Winnemucca Junior High were significantly higher, by five to eight students per teacher, than at the elementary and high school levels. While the McDermitt School scores were consistently the lowest in the district, the average scores for the district's Remote Rural Schools met or exceeded the district average in nearly all subtests at all levels.

When the site principals listed annual "Highlights" in their Part I School reports, they noted important activities and accomplishments. With only one exception, these were not related to test score data. The exception was McDermitt School which reported higher SAT/ACT scores than their historical average.

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Humboldt County School District did not submit a Part III Report.

3. Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Humboldt County School District did not submit a Part III Report.

4. Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site.

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Humboldt County School District did not submit a Part III Report.

5. Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.

While the district submitted the Part I. School Accountability Report and the Part II. District Accountability Report, no Part III Report was submitted. The Part III Report is the Evaluation of Accountability Findings. NRS 385.347 and the Accountability Handbook provided by the Nevada Department of Education clearly set out expectations that a separate Part III Report will be submitted and that districts will use accountability data to plan school improvement. Planning school improvement based on accountability findings is essential if Humboldt County students are to benefit from the accountability process.

The goals or plans reported in the Part I and Part II Reports were rarely tied to test score analysis. This needs to change. Though no relationship with test data was stated, the district-wide goal statement included in Part II did include the review of current reading instruction and sponsoring inservice training for reading teachers in kindergarten through grade ten. These districtwide goals also included refocusing the professional staff in the teaching of writing by utilizing the writing traits assessed in the state-wide writing competency tests.

Lander County School District

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.*

The Lander District reported a total enrollment of 1,523 for the 1994-95 school year, a decrease of approximately 5% from the prior year. Data were reported for Battle Mountain Elementary, Junior High, and High Schools and for the combined Austin Schools. The latter enrolls 102 students in kindergarten through grade twelve.

In the report for the prior year, a high transiency rate was noted. This continued to be high, with a rate of 28% in 1994-95. Class sizes in the three Battle Mountain schools continued to be similar to those in other districts across the state. The number of students per grade in the Austin Combined Schools was quite modest, ranging from 5 to 11.

The district reported an overall rate for parent involvement of 79%. There was wide variation, however, with the Austin Schools reporting a rate of 93%, Battle Mountain Elementary School reporting a rate of 95%, Battle Mountain Junior High reported a rate of 84%, and Battle Mountain High School reporting a parental involvement rate of only 45%.

The attendance rate in all schools was at or near 95%. The dropout rate was under 10% for the district. Essentially all classes were taught by teachers in their license/endorsement area.

On the eighth grade writing test, the districtwide percentage of students demonstrating proficiency ranged from 69% to 74%. The small group of eighth graders in the Austin school had an especially high rate of performance on this test. On two of the four traits scored, more than 85% of the students demonstrated proficiency and on one trait, Voice, 100% showed proficiency. It was interesting to note, however, that these eighth graders at Austin did not have comparable performance on the CTBS. Their average language score was at the 31st percentile, and one-half of these students scored in the lowest quartile of the national norming group.

Overall, the district scores on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) tended to be above the national average in each grade with the exception of grade two. In almost every instance, the math score was the highest of the three CTBS scores. In grades four through eight, more than 92% of the students at each grade level participated in the achievement testing. In grades two and three, the participation rates were 82% and 85%, respectively.

There was an unusual pattern in the report of participation in special education. District wide, the overall rate was approximately 9%. However, in the Austin Schools, 17% of the students in grades six through twelve were participating in special education, and 18% of the students at Battle Mountain Junior High School were receiving special education services.

Lander County School District

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Lander County School District did not submit any document identified as a Part III Report. Neither exemplary performance nor areas of improvement were reported.

3. *Areas needing improvement at the school site.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Lander County School District did not identify any areas needing improvement at the school site.

In a June 13, 1996 letter to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Lander District Superintendent did state concern about deficiencies in eighth grade writing proficiency. He stated the need to improve teacher training opportunities.

4. *Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Lander County School District did not submit any plans for improvement in a Part III report.

The letter from the superintendent mentioned above did include a sentence which said, "More study skill development will be integrated into the curriculum." However, no plans for implementing this intention were described.

5. *Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.*

Schools are encouraged to continue attempting to state progress toward goals in terms of measureable, objectively identifiable indicators as they write individual school accountability reports.

No Part III Report was submitted by the Lander County School District. The Part III Report is the Evaluation of Accountability Findings. NRS 385.347 and the Accountability Handbook provided by the Nevada Department of Education clearly set out expectations that a separate Part III Report will be submitted and that districts will use accountability data to plan school improvement. Planning school improvement based on accountability findings is essential if Lander County students are to benefit from the accountability process.

Lincoln County School District

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.*

The Lincoln County School District reported a total enrollment of 1,129 for 1994-95, reflecting a growth rate of approximately 11% over the prior year. Data were reported for four elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools. The transiency rate for this district remains low, at 18%.

In the report for the prior year (1993-94), it was noted that only 77% of the students in the fourth grade completed the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS). The district summary of CTBS scores for the 1994-95 school year did not report the percentage of participation. However, individual school reports from every Lincoln County school indicated that 100% of all students in every grade in the district took the CTBS. This apparent increase in the participation rate is commendable. Other districts may be interested in learning what provisions Lincoln County made for testing the 10% of its students who were receiving special education services.

The CTBS were administered in grades one through nine. Results indicate an average to above average level of performance in almost every instance. An exception was the report of lower than average performance at Caliente Elementary School for the first four grades, with a marked increase at grade five, and an even larger increase at grade six. Knowing what interventions were responsible for this pattern could be useful to other districts. Perhaps these increases are evidence that the usefulness of the CTBS results in smaller districts would be significantly improved if it were possible to follow cohort groups over time.

In this district, the dropout rate is extremely low, less than 1%. Thirty-six percent of teachers hold master's degrees, and the rest have baccalaureate degrees. Sixty-one percent of teachers have ten or more years of experience. The average class size for all elementary grades is less than 18. All seniors successfully completed the Nevada High School Proficiency Exam.

2. *Areas identified in the school district's Part III Report as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

In the review of the 1993-94 report, it was noted that the report needed more specificity in the reports for individual schools. Compliance with that recommendation was clearly evident in the Part III report for this year. Exemplary performance and/or signs of improvement with data-based evidence and model programs were listed for every school. For instance, Caliente reported

improved reading scores, a high attendance rate, and improved parent support. Pahranagat Valley, Panaca, and Pinoche Elementary all reported higher reading scores and increased parent support. Secondary schools reported increased use of technology; high student participation in intermurals, art, and drama; higher academic standards; and high ACT scores.

3. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.*

District-wide needs for improvement were identified including plans for remedy. For example, the level of performance in mathematics is reported as a concern across the different schools. "The decision to focus on math is based on CTBS test scores, student grades, and teacher input. The math committee is made up of teachers, administrators, and involves business people and parents."

4. *Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site.*

The report includes specific plans to address math needs, including special training for the math committee and rewriting the math curriculum and evaluation process. Other plans for improvement included continued science workshops to inservice teachers on science curriculum, and a focus on safe schools in collaborative action with the sheriff's department.

5. *Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.*

Those responsible for this report should be commended for its thoroughness, readability, and responsiveness to prior suggestions. Clearly the students of Lincoln County are benefiting from data-based decision making emerging from thoughtful analysis of accountability data.

The instructions for Part I state that indicators of progress toward meeting goals must be stated in measurable, objectively identifiable terms. This was not evident in some individual school reports, as in the progress reports from Pahranagat Valley Elementary School, but was evident in some others, as in the report for Caliente Elementary School. In context, however, all school reports from this district appeared to be consistent with the spirit of the accountability process, and all who were involved deserve commendation.

Lyon County School District

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.*

The Lyon County School District enrolled 5,133 students in 1994-95. Schools included five elementary schools, four schools serving middle grades, three high schools, and Smith Valley Schools which serve kindergarten through twelfth grade.

The Lyon County School District dropout rate fell from 8.3% in 1993-94 to 6.8% in 1994-95. However, Fernley High School's twelfth grade dropout rate of 18.8% and Dayton High School's eleventh and twelfth grade dropout rates, of 14% and 15.9% respectively, pointed to needs for improvement. The districtwide average daily attendance rate of 92.6% included lower rates of 90.4% at Silver Springs Elementary School, 90.7% at Dayton High School, and 90.9% at Yerington High School.

Districtwide achievement scores on the CTBS indicated that students were achieving at or above average in reading, language, and math for grades two, four, and eight. In these grades, between 89.8% and 93.4% of the students were tested. Interestingly, in grade six, where only 78% of students were tested, average scores were at the 46th percentile in reading, the 44th percentile in language, and the 41st percentile in math. Silver Springs Elementary School demonstrated consistently lower test performance than other elementary schools. Achievement of Smith Valley students led that of other sixth and eighth grade students in all areas. At four of the district's five attendance centers, the sixth grade math scores were lower than scores in reading and language.

More than two-thirds of Lyon county eighth graders demonstrated proficiency in all four areas of their writing competency test. Every high school senior passed the Nevada High School Proficiency Exams. Almost half of Lyon County students took the ACT college entrance exam. The average score for these students was 22, slightly higher than state and national averages. Only 21.9% of students took the SAT. Though student performance on the SAT increased between 1994 and 1995, average scores were still lower than both state and national averages.

2. *Areas identified in the school district's Part III Report as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

While Lyon County identified no examples *of* exemplary achievement or improved performance at the school site, it did identify several examples districtwide. Also identified were

relevant evidence and programs believed to be responsible for the improvements. The district reported that the reduced dropout rate was positively impacted by new procedures for tracking down students after their withdrawal and by programs such as an Alternative Education Placement Program and Student Assistance Programs.

Increased CTBS test scores were attributed partially to use of a new math curriculum and textbooks and training teachers to use the new curriculum. Another factor identified was the analysis of CTBS scores to determine areas of the curriculum that needed enhancement or improvement.

3. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.*

No areas in need of improvement at the were identified in the Part III Report, as required by the Nevada School Accountability Program. However, the Part III report indicated that the district used CTBS score analysis to determine areas of curriculum that needed enhancement or improvement, districtwide. Perhaps areas in need of improvement may be inferred from the plans for improvement set out below.

4. *Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site.*

While no plans for improvement at specific school sites were reported, the district implemented a Reading Recovery Program to increase reading achievement. It was acknowledged that this program would probably not impact CTBS scores for at least five years.

The district also planned to implement districtwide writing assessment in the fourth grade and sixth grades over the next two years. Teacher training and participation in scoring writing traits were expected to positively impact writing achievement. Writing portfolios are to be implemented in kindergarten through grade eight.

5. *Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.*

While it is clear that Lyon County School District was using accountability data to plan districtwide improvements in its educational programs, the analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site are required by NRS 385.347.

The need to for such analysis at the various school sites was underscored by reading the individual school reports submitted in compliance with Part I. of the Nevada Accountability

Lyon County School District

Program. When principals identified building goals or progress toward goals, they rarely were related to test score analysis or other achievement outcome measures.

Mineral County School District

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.*

The Mineral County School District enrolled 1,185 students in 1994-95. Hawthorne and Schurz Schools served kindergarten through grade eight, and Mineral County High School served grades nine through twelve. The districtwide average daily attendance (ADA) rate was 92.1%. Additional effort may be needed to improve the high school's ADA rate of 90.9% and the Schurz ADA rate of 89%. The high school dropout rate was a commendable 6.3% The report also demonstrated modest improvement in both ACT scores and the eighth grade Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam.

The districtwide average percentile rank on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) was just above the national average in 1995. First grade scores were lower than in 1994 in all areas tested. Scores were also lower in second grade reading, in fourth grade language, and in fifth grade reading. Gains were reported in third grade language, in sixth grade reading, and in seventh grade math. Schurz School generally scored lower on the CTBS than the other schools in the District.

Each site principal listed highlights in the Part I. School Report. Highlights at Mineral County High School included such activities as special education inclusion, Northwest Association accreditation, peer counseling, vocational programs, and student tutoring. Hawthorne Elementary-Middle School included achievement on the eighth grade state writing proficiency exam, CTBS score improvements, science fair, and spelling bee participation and competitive sports teams. Schurz Elementary School listed increases of staff, improvements to facilities and greater community cooperation without reference to more specific improvements in outcomes.

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Mineral County School District did not submit a Part III Report including examples of exemplary achievement or areas of improvement.

Mineral County School District

3. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified areas in need of improvement in performance at the school site.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Mineral County School District did not submit a Part III Report including areas in need of improvement.

4. *Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site..*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Mineral County School District did not submit a Part III Report including any plans for improvement.

5. *Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.*

While the district submitted the Part I. School Accountability Report and the Part II. District Accountability Report, no Part III Report was submitted. The Part III Report includes the Evaluation of Accountability Findings. NRS 385.347 and the Accountability Handbook provided by the Nevada Department of Education clearly set out expectations that a separate Part III Report will be submitted and that districts will use accountability data to plan school improvement.

The goals set out in the Part I and Part II Reports seem to reflect some prior planning for improvement. However, most of the goals were general in nature and did not reflect test score analysis. Planning school improvement based on accountability findings is essential if Mineral County students are to benefit from the accountability process.

Nye County School District

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.*

The enrollment for the Nye County School district in 1994-95 was 4,170, in comparison with an enrollment of 3,918 reported in the previous year. The district report listed an annual enrollment change of 6% and the superintendent's review reported a growth rate of 8.6%. The research bulletin, Student Enrollment and Licensed Personnel Information, issued by the Nevada Department of Education in February 1995, reported an enrollment change of 6.4%.

Grade levels included in the individual schools of Nye County varied widely. One school served kindergarten only; another served kindergarten through fifth grade; and still another, kindergarten through six. Four schools enrolled kindergarten through eighth grade; two, first through fifth grades, and one, grades one through six.

Schools serving only secondary students include one which enrolled seventh and eighth grades and one, grades seven through twelve. Three high schools served students in ninth through twelfth grades.

Though the district reported standardized achievement test scores for grades three through ten, only fourth and eighth grade achievement outcomes are described here. Fourth grade achievement scores in reading and language were, like those in the previous year, near the national average. However, the average percentile rank in mathematics dropped from the 48th to the 40th percentile.

As was true in the previous year, individual school data revealed wide variations in achievement. For example, at Amargosa Valley Elementary School, achievement had dropped steadily for three years, in reading falling from the 42nd percentile to the 32nd percentile, to the 25th percentile. In math, fourth grade scores fell from the 36th percentile, to the 34th percentile, to the 20th percentile; and in language the pattern was from the 50th, to the 30th, to the 19th percentile. In contrast, achievement of fourth graders at Gabbs Elementary School, over the same three-year period, rose from the 39th to the 50th percentile in reading, from the 32nd to the 54th percentile in math, and from the 28th to the 53rd percentile in language.

Eighth grade achievement, districtwide, fell in each of the three years from 1992-93 to 1994-95. Though reading achievement was still at the national average 50th percentile in 1995, math and language achievement had fallen below the national average. Math achievement dropped from the 68th to the 39th percentile, and language achievement from the 57th to the 46th percentile. On the other hand, more Nye County eighth graders demonstrated proficiency in

writing than was true in the previous year. More than two-thirds of eighth graders demonstrated competency in three of the four areas scored on the Nevada writing test. More than 99% of Nye County seniors passed the Nevada High School Proficiency Exams in reading, mathematics, and writing.

In 1994-95, the district revised and adopted a new math and science curriculum for kindergarten through twelfth grade.

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

The Part III Report for Nye County listed exemplary or improved achievement at the district level and at each individual school site. Evidence was cited and/or model programs or activities were identified which were believed to be responsible. One of the four areas cited at the district level was the improvement in processes for the education of special needs students. The district

- Published a new handbook on special education law, rights, and procedures.
- Created a video on Due Process Rights.
- Wrote a corrective action plan.
- Provided staff development facilitated by UNLV and NDE.
- Established a continuum of service
- Collaborated with the Special Education Parent Advisory Council
- Resolved/mediated outstanding due process and court cases.

Examples of exemplary or improved achievement at the various school sites include the following:

Beatty Elementary School

- Standardized test reading scores averaged 70th percentile in grade 7 and 65th percentile in grade 8.
- Expanded Middle School academic program: developed computer lab to include 4 new computers to bring the total to 16, moved science tech program to the old shop area for more space.

Beatty High School

- 62% of graduates went on to some form of post secondary education.

Duckwater School

- 100% attended parent conferences and the Christmas Program.

Pahrump High School

- Teachers trained so that a projected change to block scheduling would be a smooth transition.
- Awarded a School-To-Work Grant.

Round Mountain Elementary School

- Creation of a Young Author's Fair for students by staff and community.

Round Mountain High School

- Very good CTBS scores for grade ten in reading, math, and language.

Tonopah High School

- Parent involvement in FBLA, activity trips, Booster Clulb, helping with band and choir, community involvement in the drama offerings.

(Because they are so integrally related, sections 3 and 4 are combined for Nye County.)

3. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.*

4. *Summary of school district's plans for improvement at the school site.*

Each school site in the Nye County School District identified one or more areas where there was a need for improvement. Plans to impact the area were also identified. The following are examples of the needs reported and the planned actions:

Amargosa Elementary School

- Eighth grade writing exam average score in the area of "voice" was low.
  Concentration on teaching "voice" at all grade levels.
- Standardized test scores in math continued to be low.
  The district has a new math curriculum, texts, supplemental materials, manipulatives, skills lists and a trainer is to be provided in the year 1995-96 in a effort to enable teachers to acquire new methods of teaching math in order to improve the performance of students.

Beatty Elementary School

- Reading scores for four, five, and six were low.
  The same methods as those applied in the seventh and eighth grades will be implemented in the lower grades.

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Gabbs Elementary School

- Eighth grade writing proficiency score was low in the area of "conventions."

  Concentrate on the teaching of "conventions" in kindergarten through grade eight.

- Standardized test scores were low in the areas of language arts and reading at grade levels three, six, seven, and eight.

  Use of the print-outs provided by the district which indicate skills not mastered by individual students so the teachers can reteach and emphasize weak areas.

5. *Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.*

Clearly, Nye County educators have embraced the spirit of Nevada School Accountability as intended by the legislature. Accountability data are being analyzed and plans for improvement are being crafted to better meet the needs of Nye County students. Continuing current accountability practices is strongly recommended. The district administrators are to be commended for the clear and detailed reports they provided for their public and for submission to the Nevada Department of Education. Additional attention is recommended to check consistency of data reported in the various components of the accountability reports.

Pershing County School District

1. A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district 's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.

In the 1994-95 school year, the Pershing County School District reported a total enrollment of 841, a reduction of 6% from the previous school year. The Part II District-Wide Report indicated a reduction of only 1.3%. The four schools in Pershing County include elementary schools at Lovelock and Imlay, as well as the Pershing County Middle and High Schools. Secondary school enrollment totaled 418, approximately one-half of the district total. However, the enrollments listed for Lovelock, the middle school, and the high school totaled 841. Though the Imlay enrollment was probably small, its students did not appear to have been included in the total given in district report.

Fourth grade achievement equaled or exceeded national averages in the 1994-95 school year. Comparisons with scores in the 1993-94 school year showed improvement from the 44th to the 50th percentile in reading, from the 49th to the 69th percentile in mathematics, and from the 51st to the 52nd percentile in language. Except in language, this reversed the achievement declines noted between 1992-93 and 1993-94. Because the fourth grade achievement for the district was exactly the same as that for Lovelock Elementary School, one wonders if Imlay's achievement was included in district totals. It may be, however, that the fourth grade enrollment at Imlay was too small to influence the district average.

Achievement of Pershing County eighth graders in 1994-95 was near national averages, demonstrating a turn-around of the decline in scores evident between 1992-93 and 1993-94. The greatest increase was in the average percentile in mathematics which improved from the 34th to the 46th percentile.

More than 65% of Pershing eighth graders demonstrated writing competency on each of four measures, and 100% of Pershing seniors demonstrated proficiency in reading, mathematics, and writing. The dropout rate decreased from 3.3% to 2.3%.

The district report showed that 10.9% of elementary students and 6.3% of secondary students were enrolled in special education. However, Lovelock Elementary School reported that 18% of its students participated in special education; the Pershing County Middle School reported that 22.7% of its sixth graders and 18.8% of its seventh and eighth graders participated; and the Pershing County High School reported that 13.3% of its students participated in special education.

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

No examples of exemplary achievement and/or areas of improvement at the school site were identified as such in Pershing County's Part III Report. However, a memo from the president of the Board of School Trustees to the Nevada Department of Education did mention the fact that a new math curriculum with supplemental staff training had been implemented. It also mentioned "a favorable attendance rate."

3. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement.*

The Pershing County School District identified no areas in need of improvement which were within the control of the district. The letter from the president of the Board of Trustees, mentioned above, did state that funding for class size reduction was deficient.

4. *Summary of the school district's plans for improvement.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Pershing County School district submitted no plans for improvement.

5. *Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings.*

The Part I. School Accountability Report and the Part II. District Accountability Report submitted by the Pershing County School District included most of the data required for these reports. The percent of students included in the district's standardized testing program should be included in future reports. More careful examination of the data submitted in these reports is recommended to avoid the kind of internal inconsistencies noted in regard to reported percentages of special education enrollment.

The Part III Report is the Evaluation of Accountability Findings. NRS 385.347 and the Accountability Handbook provided by the Nevada Department of Education clearly set out expectations that a separate Part III Report will describe how the district is using accountability data to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement and to plan school improvement. These factors were not included in Pershing County's Part III Report. No evidence was provided indicating that accountability data were used to plan for school improvement at the site level.

Pershing County School District

Planning school improvement is essential if Pershing County students are to benefit from the accountability process.

Storey County School District

1. A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.

In the 1994-95 school year, the Storey County School District enrollment was 501 students in two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. This reflected a slightly reduced total enrollment which stemmed from an 8% decrease at Virginia City High School. While transiency rates were lower in the two elementary schools compared to the 1993-94 school year, increased transiency rates were reported for the middle and high schools, 30% and 28%, respectively. Attendance rates were lower in all four schools in Storey County than in the prior year. Parent involvement rates, as indicated by "back to school night" and parent-teacher conference attendance, were over 75%, with the highest level of parent involvement in Gallagher Elementary School.

Class sizes at the elementary level ranged from 5 to 19. In the middle school, average class sizes for core subjects were 18 to 20, and, in the high school, 13 to 17. While 100% participation was noted in art, music, and physical education programs at the elementary level, it appeared that elementary computer courses were not offered because zero enrollment was reported. Enrollment in special education classes was high in Storey County schools. Elementary schools reported participation rates of 23% and 29%. At the middle school, 10% participated in special education classes and, at the and high school, 26%.

Fifty percent of Storey County teachers have more than 10 years of experience. One hundred percent of elementary teachers have bachelor's degrees and about 40% of middle school and high school teachers have advanced degrees. In Virginia City High School, over 20% of the classes in English, science, and social studies were taught by teachers outside their area of licensure; and in Virginia City Middle School, 14% of science classes and 29% of math classes were taught by teachers outside their endorsement area.

Districtwide performance of fourth graders in Storey County on standardized achievement tests was below the national average in all areas and significantly lower than in the prior year, with average percentiles falling from 55 to 38 in reading, from 37 to 29 in math, and from 63 to about 40 in language. This language score was estimated, based on results at each of the two elementary schools, because the district reported no districtwide average percentile for language. School-by-school analysis indicated that, while more than 50% of Gallagher fourth graders scored in the top quartile of national norms, an exceptionally high percentage of fourth graders at Hillsdale scored in the bottom quartile. Specifically, 44% of Hillsdale fourth graders scored in the bottom quartile in reading, 66% in math, and 33% in language.

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Eighth-grader's CTBS scores were above the national averages in reading and mathematics, with no percentile rank being reported for language. As was true in fourth grade, scores in 1994-95 were lower than in 1993-94. Average percentiles dropped from 67.8 to 53.1 in reading and from 80 to 63.6 in math. Over 30% of eighth graders were reported as scoring in the top quartile of the national norming group in reading and math. These data were inconsistent. While the average percentile ranks fell, the percentage of students reported to be in the top quartile rose significantly. For instance, the average percentile rank in math fell from 80 to 63.6, but the reported percentage in the top quartile rose from 10% to 30.3%.

The passing rates for high school seniors on reading, math, writing proficiency exams were 100%. Between 60% and 80% of Storey County eighth graders demonstrated writing competency in the various traits scored. Except for the score which assessed ideas, all three of the other scores on the writing proficiency test -- organization, voice, and conventions -- showed some decrease in performance when compared to performance in the 1993-94 school year. Thirty percent of Storey County High School students took the ACT, achieving a district average score of 23.1, which was somewhat above state and national averages. On the other hand, SAT scores averaged 437 in math and 434 in verbal skills, both lower than the Nevada averages of 508 in math and 511 in verbal skills. Overall, the report showed decreased performance levels, in comparison with the prior year, in most reported areas.

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Storey County School District did not submit a Part III Report.

3. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Storey County School District did not submit a Part III Report.

4. *Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site.*

In violation of NRS 385.347, the Storey County School District did not submit a Part III Report. Hence, no plans for improvement were submitted.

5. *Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.*

Reviewing Part I. and Part II Accountability Reports for accuracy and clarity is strongly recommended. Accountability data and some messages in the 1994-95 district-wide Accountability Report were inconsistent. For example, while Gallagher Elementary School's average percentile ranks for CTBS reading, math, and language arts were all below the 40th percentile in the numerical report, the principal's message reported that the average Gallagher student scored at the 83rd percentile. Careful review can avoid future inconsistency in the reporting of data on CTBS average percentile ranks and the percent of students in the top and the bottom quartiles. When, for example, the average percentile rank is 32.1, it is highly unlikely that 53.6% of students can be in the top quartile.

Missing information and a number of computation and typing errors in the Part I and Part II report were evident. (An example of missing information was the lack of reporting of school phone numbers and principals' names.) Information placement detracted from clear and accurate communication to citizens.

NRS 385.347 and the Accountability Handbook provided by the Nevada Department of Education clearly set out expectations that districts will use accountability data to plan school improvement. The accountability process can help improve education of Storey County students if data are analyzed, areas of deficiency recognized, and improvement plans made based on the accountability data. Storey County students have not realized this intended benefit of the Nevada accountability process.

Washoe County School District

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district' school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.*

The Washoe County School District enrolled 44,884 students in 1994-95, representing a growth rate of 3.9% from the previous school year. These students attended 53 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, and 10 high schools. The districtwide attendance rate was 94%, and the transiency rate 42%. Overall, the dropout rate was 8.4%, with the highest rates in grade twelve (16.3%) and in grade eleven (10.6%). The districtwide truancy rate was 16.2%.

Accountability reports provided by the Washoe County School District included (1) a four-page bi-fold presentation of the basic statistics, goals, and achievements of each individual school, (2) a separate book collating this information for the entire district in tabular form, and (3) a Part III accountability effectiveness report.

The material contained a school-by-school listing of results from the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) for grades three, four, five, and six for the elementary schools. The superintendent reported an average or above average score on all tests. However, the exclusion rate (children not tested) was rarely less than 10%. In some cases 30% to 50% or more of the children in a school were not included in the testing sample. Since this selective population does not reflect the procedures used in the norming sample, this would greatly skew the findings. This exclusion rate makes comparisons to national norms highly questionable.

A similar situation was found in the reporting of CTBS scores in the middle schools. The reported exclusion rates were as high as in the elementary grades. Some schools reported testing 101% (figure reported) ranging to a low of 74%, with most schools only testing 80%. Again, comparisons to national norms with such high selection rates is misleading.

These testing data indicated that about 20% of the children in Washoe county were not assessed. Therefore, about one family in five was unable to ascertain the quality of education their child was receiving or their child's level of attainment. Systematically excluding children with special needs or who speak English as a second language raises the question of inappropriate differentiation in educational opportunity. If there are no measures to assess the education provided these students, then how is the district accountable to the public? Even more importantly, how are schools accountabile to the parents of children excluded from testing?

Additionally, the data indicated that even if ALL special needs children and ALL children in English as a Second Language program were excluded from testing, the exclusion rate was still

greater, often adding as much as 10% to the number of children being excluded. In no case were exclusion rates explained.

High school achievement was reported primarily in terms of the Nevada High School Proficiency Exam and college entrance exams. The districtwide average pass rate on the proficiency exam was 99%. Yet, when compared to the dropout data which indicate high levels of leaving school early, this figure does not reflect the achievement of the entire high school population.

About one- third of elementary schools reported little or no violence to students. Parental involvement in all schools appeared to be a priority and impressive figures for parent participation were reported. However, the extent and nature of participation was not reported.

Reported instances of high school substance abuse were very low. The reported figures identify virtually no instances of use or distribution of controlled substances on school grounds. This is in stark contrast to national figures and expected projections. For example, in a high school with 116 acts of violence toward students and 11 counts of possession of weapons, it was surprising to see NO controlled substance interventions reported. This raises the question of whether Washoe County should be recognized nationally for its exemplary substance abuse programs or criticized for not establishing sufficient supervision so that substance abuse can be spotted. Certainly, the school district should have identified its substance abuse programs among its greatest of strengths if the former is true.

Among elementary schools, Brown was notable in that it took seriously its role of providing assessments based on its school population by testing 90% to 95% of its students by grade level. Brown scored well above average in all areas and across all ages. In some areas, such as language across all age levels, performance could be termed excellent. According to the data, Brown appeared to be the typical school demographically with a mainstream cross section of ability and measure of family income. Brown maintained a 94% attendance level which was among the highest in Washoe County.

Anderson Elementary School demonstrated that schools with a majority of low income families can provide excellent educational opportunities resulting in strong student achievement. With a free lunch participation of 70%, which is fourth highest among Washoe County elementary schools, Anderson approached and in some cases exceeded district averages on the CTBS at all grade levels. Even though a significant percentage of the the students were enrolled in special education or English as a second language classes, Anderson tested 88 to 95% of its students and demonstrated high student achievement. The range reflected variations by grade level.

Washoe County School District

While some individual schools distinguished themselves as bastions of commitment to student achievement, other schools exhibited specific needs. For instance, in comparison with Anderson, which had 70% free lunch participation, Desert Heights reported a similar, though somewhat lower, participation rate of 61%. However, the learning outcomes between the schools were dramatically different. Desert Heights reported scores 20-30 percentile points below district averages. Evaluating this performance was complicated by the fact that from 18 to 41% of the children were excluded from testing. The exclusion rate varied by grade level. Only 10.9% of Desert Heights students were eligible for special education and none received English as a second language services. Hence, it appeared that the exclusion rate of 41% in fourth grade was 400% greater than the total of the enrollment in English as a second language and in special education.

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

Though none of the examples cited were tied to specific school sites, Washoe County's Part III Report identified the following areas of exemplary achievement and improvement over the previous year:

- Test scores continued to be above state and national norms. Thirty-seven percent of the district's third graders scored in the top quartile on the mathematics test.
- The district's average ACT score of 21.4 was similar to state average of 21.3 and well above the 20.8 national average score. The district's combined SAT average score of 918 is just above the state average of 917 and well above the national average of 910.
- Parent and community involvement expanded significantly. Activities included a parent newsletter and new volunteer programs. Expanding parent days to a full week attracted 1,100 parents.
- The Reading Recovery Program was instituted with the help of a $101,000 grant from the Walter S. Johnson Foundation.

(Because they are so integrally related, sections 3 and 4 are combined for Washoe County.)

3. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.*
4. *Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site.*

Though no areas in need of improvement were identified on a site-by-site basis, the district indicated the following needs and plans for improvement:

Washoe County School District

- The considerable gap in student achievement between high achieving and low achieving schools in the district.

  Directing more resources, both in staff and in finances, to those schools where achievement is well below that in other schools.

- Although schools are generally safe places to be, the level of school violence is troubling. A total of 505 high school students, 843 middle schoolers, and 344 elementary students faced disciplinary action, largely for fighting.

  The district instituted a Violence Intervention Program for serious offenders. If the student and his/her parents or guardians completed a series of counseling sessions, the school waived eight days of the usual ten day suspension.

- High school truancy rates, defined as the percentage of students with ten or more days of unexcused absences, was reported as another area of concern. Three schools had rates above 25%.

  All high schools have full-time attendance clerks and automated calling systems to notify parents of missed classes. In addition, the district employs six full-time attendance officers whose job it is to follow up the most serious cases. In coooperation with local law enforcement, juvenile services, and other agencies, the district regularly conducts attendance "sweeps" of the community to find truants and notify their parents.

5. *Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.*

The Washoe County School District's Part III report did not identify areas of exemplary or improved performance at individual school sites. While Part I. School reports often mentioned areas of pride under the "Principal's Highlights," in no case was it evident that a systematic analysis of accountability data had been used to demonstrate school excellence. While there is some evidence that the district as a whole is using data to guide districtwide school improvement, individual school analysis and use of data for school improvement was not apparent. Analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site are important to realizing the potential benefits of the Nevada School Accountability Program. The following observations are made as recommendations for consideration in preparing future accountability reports.

Areas of concern, but not identified as needs in the 1994-95 report, were the high school dropout rates and the relatively high absentee rates among elementary schools. For example, a school reporting a 90% attendance rate indicates that the average student is missing 18 days a

year, which seems excessive. Certainly, the employers in the county would prefer that children be taught the importance of attendance as this can impact future attitudes toward being on the job. Reporting the percentages of seniors passing high school proficiency exams would be more meaningful if compared to the percentage of students who enter school in the ninth grade and who are still in school in their senior year.

Attention is recommended to the considerable number of students who are excluded from standardized testing. When only 60% to 80% of the children in some schools were permitted to take the tests, the scores become highly suspect, because it seems likely that children excluded would be those expected to do poorly. Children excluded from testing should, perhaps, be considered for individualized achievement testing, because all parents are entitled to assessments of their children's achievement compared to national norms.

Contrasting the curriculum and instructional programs in schools where students are succeeding with those at schools where children coming from similar homes are not doing well could yield important insights. For instance, the comparisons between Brown, Anderson and Desert Heights, pointed out earlier, warrant serious study which could provide guidance for school improvement.

White Pine County School District

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted by the district to the State Board of Education in Part I School Reports and Part II District-Wide Reports.*

The White Pine School District reported a total enrollment for 1994-95 of 1,797, which represented an increase of approximately 7 percent over the prior year. Data were reported for three elementary schools, one middle school, Lund High School serving grades seven through twelve, and White Pine High School serving grades nine through twelve. The average daily attendance was 92.4%, and the transiency rate almost 21%. The dropout rate was 6.5%

The White Pine faculty were very experienced as almost 42% had ten or more years of experience. More than 24% held master's degrees, and 92.3% were teaching within their area of licensure and endorsement. The exceptions to licensure occurred in high school English.

The district administered the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) to students in kindergarten through ninth grade, enabling communication with parents about standardized achievement every year. More than 90% of students were tested in most grades. The performance of students at grades four and eight, the grades in which Nevada law requires testing, will be reviewed here. Percentile ranks of fourth graders were 48 in reading, 42 in math, and 51 in language. At Mt. View, by far the largest of the elementary schools, achievement was higher than the district average with percentile ranks of 53 in reading, 48 in math, and 58 in language. The highest performers in reading and language were in the small fourth grade class at Lund, where average percentile ranks were 68 in reading and 66 in language.

Districtwide reported average percentile ranks of eighth graders were 65 in reading, 53.8 in math, and 46.4 in language. While the district's 1993-94 report indicated that 90% of eighth graders demonstrated writing competency in at least three of the four traits scored, in 1994-95 the strongest trait scored was voice in which 60% scored at a proficient level, and the lowest trait was Conventions in which only 49% were proficient.

2. *Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

The Part III. Report of White Pine School District identified several areas of exemplary or improved performance. The report stated that White Pine Middle School showed stronger reading and language scores in eighth grade as well as improvement on the writing proficiency tests. High average daily attendance and high scores on the CTBS tests were noted for Lund.

White Pine County School District

White Pine High School reported that 7% of its senior class was honored as Nevada Scholars. The percentage of students at White Pine High School who took the ACT test increased from 57% in 1993-94 to 81% in 1994-95. This high school also pointed with pride to its strides in developing applied academics classes as well as a School-to-Work Program.

3. Areas the school district's Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site.

The district listed four areas needing improvement in performance. As stated by the district, they were as follows:

1. Math scores dropped or failed to improve at most school sites.
2. Social studies, K-12 books, reading books, and language arts books are seriously outdated.
3. Technology equipment is in need of upgrading.
4. Curriculum needs ot be audited for better match with national standards and state guidelines.

4. Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school site.

The White Pine County School district indicated that it had formulated a plan for upgrading its math instruction, particularly for teachers in kindergarten through sixth grade. The plan included inservicing administrators and teachers and providing additional hands-on teaching materials.

The Part III report stated that the district planned to "use our one-shot monies, Carl Perkins, School-to-Work, and district money to supply our schools with newer textbooks and technology equipment."

White Pine reported that it had formulated a plan for a systematic curriculum audit including grade-by-grade meetings to formulate grade level curriculum content for parents. At the time this report was submitted, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade curriculum had been completed.

5. Recommendations for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site.

This district appears to have made a good effort to comply with the Nevada School Accountability Program. Part and Part II Reports are clear and concise. The analysis and use of accountability data appear to be limited to the district level, rather than carried out at each

individual school site. School level analysis and use of the findings are recommended so that White Pine students can gain maximum potential benefit from the process. In addition, more clearly connecting accountability findings with plans for improvement is recommended.

Noted in the review of this district's accountability report last year was an unusual pattern in the CTBS scores. There were several instances of an average lower than the 50th percentile, but a high percentage of students scoring in the upper quartile. This pattern was evident again the current report. While this is statistically "possible", it is unlikely and may warrant specific review of these scores. Consistency between the district and school data reported also need to be checked before submitting the reports or distributing them to the public.

One section of White Pine's Part III Report for 1994-95 appeared to have been included by mistake. It listed data that had been part of the district's 1993-94 report but was not true in 1994-95. One example of this was stating that "90% of eighth graders demonstrated writing competency in at least three of the traits listed." This was one of ten items headed, "Other areas of exemplary performance or improved performance noted by the analysis report of the Panel of Scholars." The list was neither an accurate portrayal of the panel's report nor relevant to the 1994-95 Part III Report for White Pine County School District.

APPENDIX A. Senate Bill No. 511: NRS 385.347

Senate Bill No. 511—Committee on Finance

CHAPTER 644

AN ACT relating to education; revising the provision concerning the program of accountability for public schools; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

[Approved July 13, 1993]

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. NRS 385.347 is hereby amended to read as follows:

385.347 1. The board of trustees of each school district in this state, in cooperation with associations recognized by the state board as representing licensed personnel in education in the district, shall adopt a program providing for the accountability of the school district to the residents of the district *and to the state board* for the quality of the schools and the educational achievement of the pupils in the district.

2. The board of trustees of each school district [may design its own program or may adopt the program developed by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

3. The program must require the board of trustees of the school district to report not less than annually] *must report during March of each year* to the residents of the district concerning:

(a) The educational goals and objectives of the school district;

(b) A comparison of pupil achievement *for each school in the district and the district as a whole* at each age and grade level for the current school year with that of previous school years;

(c) The ratio of pupils to teachers at each grade level *for each school in the district and the district as a whole* and other data concerning licensed and unlicensed employees of the school district;

(d) A comparison of the types of classes that each teacher has been assigned to teach with the qualifications and licensure of the teacher [;] , *for each school in the district and the district as a whole;*

(e) The total expenditure per pupil, set forth individually for each source of funding [;] , *for each school in the district and the district as a whole;*

(f) The curriculum used by the school district, including any special programs for pupils [;] *at an individual school;*

(g) Records of the attendance and advancement of pupils in all grades, *for each school in the district and the district as a whole,* and of graduation rates for pupils in *each* high school [; and] *in the district;*

(h) Efforts made by the school district *and by each school in the district* to increase communication with the parents of pupils in the district [.] *; and*

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(i) Such other information as is directed by the superintendent of public instruction.

3. The superintendent of public instruction shall:

(a) Prescribe forms for the reports required pursuant to subsection 2 and provide the forms to the respective school districts.

(b) Provide statistical information and technical assistance to the school districts to ensure that the reports provide comparable information with respect to each school in each district and among the districts.

(c) Consult with a representative of:

(1) The Nevada State Education Association;

(2) The Nevada Association of School Boards;

(3) The Nevada Association of School Administrators; and

(4) The Nevada Parent Teachers Association,

concerning the program and consider any advice or recommendations submitted by the representatives with respect to the program.

4. On or before April 15 of each year, the board of trustees of each school district shall submit to the state board the report made pursuant to subsection 2. On or before June 15 of each year, the board of trustees of each school district shall submit to the state board:

(a) A separate report summarizing the effectiveness of the district's program of accountability during the school year; and

(b) A description of the efforts the district has made to correct deficiencies identified in the report submitted pursuant to paragraph (a).

5. On or before February 1 of each year, the superintendent of public instruction shall analyze the information submitted to the state board and report to the legislature concerning the effectiveness of the programs of accountability adopted pursuant to this section. In even-numbered years, the report must be submitted to the legislative commission.

Sec. 2. This act becomes effective on July 1, 1993, and expires by limitation on July 1, 1997.

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NOTE: The expiration date for this act was removed in the 1995 legislative session.

APPENDIX B. Letter from the Office of the Attorney General regarding NRS 385.347

STATE OF NEVADA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
Capitol Complex
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FRANKIE SUE DEL PAPA
Attorney General

BROOKE A. NIELSEN
Assistant Attorney General

November 15, 1993

Eugene T. Paslov, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Department of Education
400 West King Street
Carson City, Nevada 89710

Dear Dr. Paslov:

You have asked this office for an opinion regarding NRS 385.347, as amended by Act of June 1, 1993, ch. 644, § 1, 1992 Nev. Stat. 2745 ("Senate Bill 511"). A difference of opinion was raised in a discussion between your office and local school district superintendents. One school district has interpreted this section to mean that the district must describe efforts to correct deficiencies in its system of accountability, not efforts to correct deficiencies that have been identified at the school sites. The interpretation will affect the type of information included in the report to the legislature and will impact local school districts' planning for compliance with the reporting requirement.

QUESTION

Is it the meaning of NRS 385.347(4) that each district shall identify deficiencies and describe efforts to correct deficiencies:

1) In the system of accountability reporting; or

2) At the school sites, based upon an analysis and interpretation of the data reported under this statute?

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ANALYSIS

NRS 385.347, sometimes known as the school accountability law, was first adopted by our legislature in 1989. Each of the 17 school districts reported district-wide data or information to the parents and community it served and to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction pursuant to the law. In the 1993 session of the legislature, the law was amended to provide refinements and to specify that the data or information shall be reported for each school in the district rather than for the district as a whole.

Subsection (4) of NRS 385.347, as amended by Senate Bill 511, provides that:

> 4. On or before April 15 of each year, the board of trustees of each school district shall submit to the state board the report made pursuant to subsection 2. On or before June 15 of each year, the board of trustees of each school district shall submit to the state board:
>
> (a) A separate report summarizing the effectiveness of the district's program of accountability during the school year; and
>
> (b) A description of the efforts the district has made to correct deficiencies identified in the report submitted pursuant to paragraph (a). [Emphasis added.]

If the language of the statute is plain and unambiguous, there is no room for construction. *Atlantic Commercial Dev. Corp. v. Boyles*, 103 Nev. 35, 38, 732 P.2d 1360 (1987). An examination of the language of the law begins with subsection (4)(a) which calls for a report of the effectiveness of the school district's "program of accountability." The key to our analysis is the description of "program of accountability" found in subsection 1 of NRS 385.347, as amended by Senate Bill 511. It states that the board of trustees shall "adopt a program providing for the accountability of the school district . . . for the quality of the schools and the educational achievement of the pupils in the district." *Id.* From the description we glean that the program of accountability is not merely the methodology for gathering and reporting the data. The deficiencies identified in the report will be deficiencies in the "quality of the schools and the educational achievement of the pupils in the district." *Id.* The effectiveness of the program would be how it affects the quality of the schools and the educational achievement of the pupils. In addition, whether the information or data constitutes a deficiency is a determination to be made by the local trustees from the data or information gathered pursuant to the law.

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CONCLUSION

NRS 385.347, as amended by Senate Bill 511, requires that each school district identify deficiencies and describe efforts to correct deficiencies in the quality of schools and the educational achievement of pupils at school sites based upon the analysis and interpretation of the data reported pursuant to this statute.

Cordially,

FRANKIE SUE DEL PAPA
Attorney General

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